

Amendments to the Claims: This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-31. (Cancelled).

32. (Previously Presented) A fixing mechanism for a rod fixation assembly comprising a tubular body having a gripping portion and a pair of arm portions extending from the gripping portion in a substantially parallel arrangement, the arm portions being separated from one another by an interior passageway extending along a portion of the tubular body, said passageway adapted to receive a rod securing fastener, the tubular body having an inner surface with inwardly-facing threads, the inwardly-facing threads being adapted to engage and axially advance a rod securing fastener that is inserted in the passageway, each arm portion comprising a thinned section adapted to break so as to separate at least a portion of the arm portion from the fixing mechanism.

33. (Previously Presented) The fixing mechanism of claim 32 wherein each thinned section is located on an edge of its respective arm portion to allow the entire arm portion to break off from the gripping portion.

34. (Previously Presented) The fixing mechanism of claim 32 wherein the passageway extends into the gripping portion.

35. (Previously Presented) The fixing mechanism of claim 33 wherein the gripping portion has a spherical shaped interior that connects with the passageway.

36. (Previously Presented) The fixing mechanism of claim 32 wherein the inwardly-facing threads extend along the thinned sections of the arm portions.

37. (Previously Presented) The fixing mechanism of claim 36 wherein the inwardly-facing threads extend into the gripping portion.

38-39. (Cancelled).

40. (Currently Amended) A rod fixation assembly for fixing a screw and a rod comprising:

a fixing mechanism having a substantially tubular body with an inner passageway and an inner wall surrounding the inner passageway;

a rod seat inserted into the inner passageway, the rod seat having a pair of flexible portions extending generally parallel to one another forming a U-shaped inner surface adapted for seating a rod between the flexible portions, the flexible portions being deflectable radially inwardly toward one another to compress against and around the exterior of a rod seated in the rod seat. The rod fixation assembly of claim 38, wherein each flexible portion comprises a tapered outer surface, the tapered outer surfaces on the flexible portions being operable to engage the inner wall of the fixing mechanism and deflect radially inwardly by interference with the inner wall so as to compress the flexible portions against and around the exterior of a rod seated in the rod seat.

41. (Previously Presented) A fixing mechanism for a rod fixation assembly comprising a substantially tubular body having a gripping portion and a pair of arm portions extending from the gripping portion in a substantially parallel arrangement, the arm portions being separated from one another by an interior passageway extending along a portion of the tubular body, said passageway adapted to receive a rod securing fastener, the tubular body having an inner surface with inwardly-facing threads, the inwardly-facing threads being adapted to engage and axially advance a rod securing fastener that is inserted in the passageway, each arm portion being segmented into portions adapted to be snapped-off from the substantially tubular body.